felling of trees are reported in various States from time to time due to the biotic pressure from the adjoining villages and activities of timbers smugglers. The offenders for forest offences are booked under the relevant provisions of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and other such State Acts and rules for the time being in force. Government of India has also initiated Joint Forest Management programme in the country in order to check degradation and for rehabilitation of degraded forests. So far an area of about 14.3 million hectares is being managed under Joint Forest Management programme in 27 States. The States have also been requested to strengthen their forest protection machinery and funds are sanctioned under Centrally Sponsored Schemes for afforestation and forest protection activities.

Forest area under Darjeeling Hill Council

2009. SHRI LALITBHAI MEHTA :

SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Darjeeling Hill Council has been given some area of forests for maintenance and development;

(b) if so, how much area has been given;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the area given is totally degraded by illegal cutting, unauthorised occupation of forests, and the unholy links between office bearers and administrators have ruined the forests under Darjeeling Hill Council; and

(d) if so, Government's proposal to rectify the situation?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Violation of Law by Cracker Manufacturers

2010. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the cracker manufacturers are violating the standard noise levels; and

(b) if so, what action is proposed to be taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) A study carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board in association with the National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi, in March-April, 2001 indicated that some of the fire crackers were not complying with the noise standards as notified *vide* GSR 682(E), October 5, 1999.

(b) Department of Explosives has been directed to restrict the manufacture and sale of fire crackers exceeding the notified noise standards.

Pollution by Garbage Carrying Vehicles

2011. SHRI RAJU PARMAR :

SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) Whether according to the Municipal Solid-waste Management Regulations formulated under the Environment Protection Act, 1998, all the garbage trucks/vehicles transporting the garbage from one spot to another are required to be fully covered;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for not adhering to the above regulations by the civic bodies like MCD, NDMC, and DDA;

(c) whether any case of negligence has been brought to the notice of Government during the last six months; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken against the authorities?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU) : (a) As per the Municipal Solid Wastes (Management and Handling) Rules, 2000, formulated under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, vehicle for transportation of wastes shall be covered.

(b) The vehicles currently used by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and Delhi Cantonment Board are not designed to comply with the Rules. MCD is in the process of purchase of specially designed vehicles to comply with the Rules. On a temporary basis, all the old vehicles are attached with sheets made of tarpaulin or thick jute material to cover the wastes during transportation. However, about one-third of MCD vehicles observed during monitoring by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) were not covered.